



Montgomery County Council

For Immediate Release

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COUNCIL REQUIRES DEFIBRILLATORS IN COUNTY HEALTH CLUBS

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The Montgomery County Council today unanimously approved legislation that requires registered health clubs in the County to have at least one defibrillator on hand, and at least one staff member trained to operate it.

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The automated external defibrillators, or AEDs, can administer a mild shock to victims of sudden cardiac arrest to keep the heart pumping until trained emergency personnel arrive. The cost of each AED unit is ranges from \$1100 to \$1500.

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"County residents, especially those over 55 years of age, who exercise strenuously are at particular risk of sudden cardiac arrest," said Councilmember Praisner. "Less than 10 percent of people who suffer cardiac arrest outside a hospital survive – and their chances get worse every moment that defibrillation is delayed."

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"This common-sense measure can save lives. AEDs are easily used. They use voice prompts to direct rescuers, monitor heart rhythms, and administer shocks only as necessary."

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The Council exempted from the requirement "mom and pop" fitness centers with three or fewer employees. The measure also exempts fitness centers from legal liability for use or non-use of AEDS, except when the AED is not installed or for gross negligence or reckless conduct.

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There are 126 licensed health clubs in the County, according to the Maryland Attorney General's registry.

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